amendment made to the drawings should remove the Examiner's objection with respect to the drawings. Furthermore, in order to more clearly show the elements, the "sealing gasket" in Fig. 4B has been denoted as numeral -- 12 --, and the "first face of the driving wheel" and the "guiding groove located on this first face" have been denoted as -- 151 --, and -- 153 --, respectively.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Pat. No. 5,743,424 in view of U. S. Pat. No. 1,273,625. Applicant would like to traverse the Examiner's rejection below by pointing out several important differences between the wafer carrier of the present invention and those taught by the references cited by the Examiner.

Applicant respectfully submits that, with regard to U. S. Pat. No. 5,743,424 (the '424 patent), the rocker arm 22 is actuated by the rotating cam member 21 in such a manner that the projection 25A or 25B moves along the surface 22b of the groove 22B, thus, the rocker arm 22 is moved in a ***horizontal direction***, and is moved upward when the roller 22a rotates on either inclined surface, 24a or 24b, of the protuberance 24A or 24B. Consequently, the valve 40 is raised as a result of the rocker arm 22's pushing the stopper 42 upward so as to abut against and close tightly the bore 35A, with the help of the annular seal 41. A flat spring 45 is used to maintain the rocker arm 22 in position.

In the present invention, in comparison, the first and second linked plates 13 and 14 are actuated by the rotation of the driving wheel 15 in such a manner that the lugs 133 and 134 of the linked plates 13 and 14 move inside and along the first guiding groove 153 located at the first face 151 of the driving wheel 15. To maintain a smooth rotation of the driving wheel 15, a circular rail 163 is provided on the bottom 16, where the circular rail 163 is received and moves along the second guiding groove 155 on the second face 152 of the driving wheel 15. By moving the linked plates 13 and 14 right- and left-ward, through the rotation of the driving wheel 15, the wedged ramp 137 moves in or out of a position where the hole 113 of the sealing gasket 12 is sealed or released. The sealing gasket 12 also has a wedged ramp on which a rim 123 is provided for a tightly sealing effect.

Applicant respectfully submits that, clearly, the structure, as well as the manner, for actuating the rocker arms 22 according to the '424 patent, and for actuating the linked plates 13 and 14 of the

present invention, are patentably distinguishable. Moreover, the bore 35A of the '424 patent and the hole 113 of the present invention are sealed by two totally different methods, in that the former is assisted by a raising/lowering valve 40, while the latter adopts a "purely" horizontal movement of the linked plate 13 or 14 and the mutual abutment of the wedged ramp 137 of the linked plate 13 or 14 and the wedged ramp of the sealing gasket 12.

With regard to U. S. Pat. No. 1,273,625 (the '625 patent), in which an anti-rattler for window-sashes is disclosed, components 5 and 7 are substantially wedged-shaped and have reversely inclined engaging edges 10 and 11, respectively. The edge 10 of the component 5 slides over the edge 11 of component 7 during upward and downward movements of the sash 6, and due to the presence of a bowed spring 15, the edges 10 and 11 are always fully engaged with each other during movement thereof.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits, in the '625 patent, components 5 and 7 having each a wedged edge 10 or 11 are provided to keep, in cooperation with spring 15, components 5 and 7 in a full and smooth engagement during movement of the sash 6 relative to the window frame. As discussed above, the structure in the '625 patent is totally different from that of the present invention, and is indeed irrelevant with regard to the present invention.

In summary, the present invention is totally different from any of the prior art references cited by the Examiner. But more importantly, none of the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination thereof, taught or suggested many of the key elements of the present invention. Applicant respectfully submits that, since many of the important limitations are lacking from the prior art teaching, a prima facie case cannot be made. In re Fine, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988)

In light of the foregoing, it is believed that the present invention is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any question, he or she is invited to call or fax Applicant's counsel at the telephone numbers below.

Respectfully Submitted,

8/24/99
Date

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